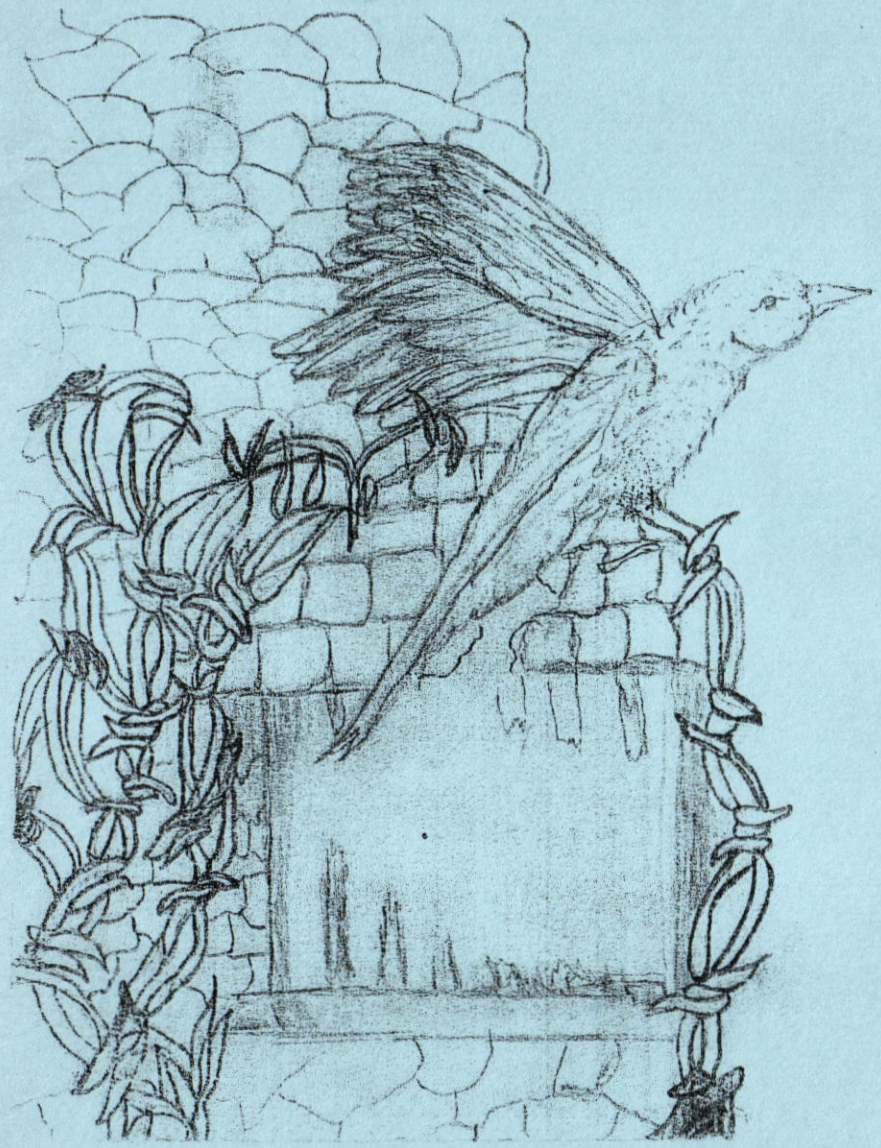
Black Star Publishing 1474 Lincoln Place, Brooklyn, NY 11213

TENACIOUS

writings from women in prison



Issue 2

Fall 2002

Please send your submissions to:
V. Law
PO Box 20388, Tompkins Square Station
New York, NY 10009

To obtain a copy of this zine or a back issue, send $2 in well-concealed cash or stamps to:

Black Star Publishing
1414 Lincoln Place
Brooklyn, NY 11213

"Tenacious" is free to women in prison.

Word from Tenacious

te-na-cious: adj. 1: not easily pulled apart: COHESIVE, TOUGHT ‹a~metal› 2: holding fast ‹~of her rights› 3: retentive ‹a~memory›

te-na-cious-ly: adv.

te-na-ci-ty: n.

related words: headstrong, persevering, persisting, pertinacious, resolute, steadfast, stubborn, true.

We associated with "Tenacious" strongly believe that everyone has a story to tell, something to share and are in need of someone who will listen and offer some kind of support and/or understanding. It is important to us that women (in and out of prison) find the power of their voice. We encourage women to share with us and others in the hopes of educating those in society and to empower other women to take a stand for their rights and the rights of others. Use the power of your voice in a positive way—to educate.

What you read is not necessarily the ideas or opinions behind "Tenacious," but the ideas and

opinions of the individuals that wrote what you read. If you agree, disagree or want to comment on something you read in this issue or any future issues, we suggest you take it up with the individual writer. Contributors' info is listed in the back of this zine. If the contributors wish to be published anonymously due to prison conditions or officials, we will do so. Comments can then be addressed to "Tenacious"" and we will try to forward them to the writer.

This zine is about freedom of speech and overcoming difficult times and remaining true to yourself, speaking up for yourself and others' rights (whatever you believe those to be). The contributors and volunteers associated with putting together and publishing this zine do not and will not get paid for their stories, artwork, etc. For those on the outside, there will be a small fee to obtain this zine, but it goes towards producing the next issue and getting copies into the hands of as many women prisoners as possible. We hope to put out an issue of "Tenacious" every three months or so.

Thanks to the women who dared to speak out last time: Barrilee Bannister, Gretchen Schumacher, Kebby Warner, Beverly Henry, Meia Launic Ann Van-Pelt, Christine Lee Foos and LaTrese Ison

To Support the Contributing Prisoners

Prison life isn't simple. Prisoners are not handed out freebies. They work long hours for little pay. Slave labor! If anyone would like to support any of the Oregon prisoners that contributed their writings, etc, to *Tenacious*, you can send a money order, made payable to their last name and state identification number (SID#) and mail it to:

Oregon DOC Central Trust Account
PO Box 14400
Salem, OR 97309-5077

Whatever is sent to any woman will help her purchase
stamped envelopes, writing supplies, hygiene items, etc.

If you would like to offer moral, emotional, mental, etc. support, we encourage you to write to that prisoner. Their name, SID#, and address are with their writing.

For Rhonda Leland or Linda Caldwell, please contact them to find out their state DOC's policy on sending money to inmates.

Aid to Children of Imprisoned Mothers
524 Larkin Street SW
Atlanta, GA 30313
Provides information to ALL incarcerated mothers.

National Indian Child Welfare Association
5100 SW Macadam Ave. #300
Portland, OR 97230
Can assist Native prisoners in navigating custody issues.

South Dakota Prisoner Support Group
PO Box 3285
Rapid City, SD 57709
(605) 399-1830
PachecoMars@aol.com
Provides support to inmates in jails and prisons and their families, and to prevent abuse of incarcerated men, woman and children of all racial and ethnic backgrounds." [We do not offer legal advice. We are not attorneys nor do we practice law in any way} Offers referrals, links, websites, information, news, as well as share our own experiences, problems, in regards to our incarcerated family members/friends.

Ten facts concerning female prisoners

1— They are often the forgotten offenders.

2— They are provided few facilities and minimal services and programs to rehabilitate themselves.

3— It is estimated that half will be victims of sexual assault while in prison.

4— They have virtually no privacy and are easily observed by male officers.

5— Female prisons are often overcrowded.

6— At least 43% experienced physical and/or sexual abuse prior to incarceration.

7— In 1998, over two-thirds of all women in prison have children under age 18. Only 25% said the children were living with the other parent.

8— Almost half reported committing their offense while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

9— Nearly one in three are serving a sentence for a drug offense.

10— The number of women in prison rose 573% from 1980 to 1997, mostly due to drug convictions.

compiled from statistics from Human Rights Watch (3) and the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics (6-10)

Newsletters, Publications and Organizations

Campaign to End Slavery in American Prisons
2103 Harrison NW #2146
Olympia, WA 98502-2607

Human Rights Watch
350 Fifth Avenue
34th floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Phone: 212-290-4700
e-mail: hrwnyc@hrw.org
website: http://www.hrw.org

Win Newsleter
Editor: Daniel Burton-Rose
PO Box 53013
Washington, DC 20009

The Human Kindness Foundation
PO Box 61619
Durham, NC 27715

This Just In…
Betty Liveright
Salem Retirement House
2361 East 29th Street
Oakland, CA 94606

"Little Bossy Girl"

How I admire you,

Your out-spoken words
ring so true,

Your fearless gestures
and fights to prove

I was wrong, and you are
rite,

Oh, How exhausting
those days,

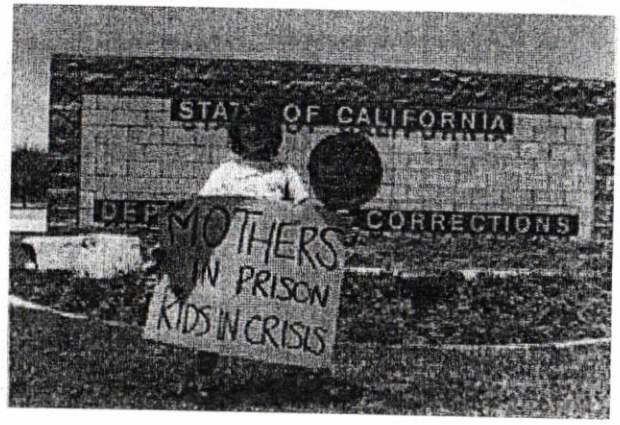
When sleep was the
only way, you lay down
your battle gear,

Little Bossy Girl,
from you I have learned,
Patience, love and
endurance

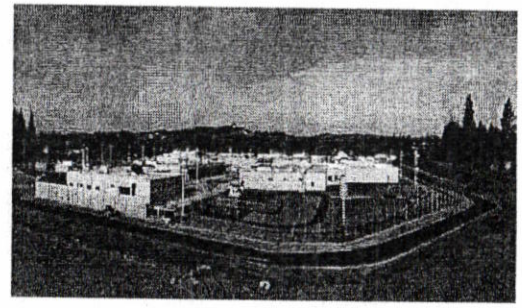
And pride beyond this
world...

Love Mother,

By Rhonda Leland 2002



thoughts from the dark confines of
the newly-built women's prison



What worries me is a beautiful lady who I have had the pleasure of knowing for 11 years now. She has been paralyzed for about 7 years now. Sandra Lawson, who used to teach me how to dance and we'd play volleyball together and then she's in a car accident that paralyzes her from her ribcage down.

Ms. Lawson came to seg on 8/14/02 for assault. Wait, did I not just say she's in a wheelchair? Yes, I do recall I did. I forgot where we are: Coffee Creek in Wilsonville, where there are no rule books in medium, where her and I are housed. Can you believe the mockery of this? Ms. Lawson was attacked in her wheelchair by a punk inmate and Lawson receives 120 in seg and the aggressor gets 21 days. Go figure.

Now it becomes a battle for her needs to get properly cared for back here where most of us are forgotten. She was not even issued a shower for the first five days back here. They denied it to her and she is currently preparing to sue for the officers covering up a lot of misdeeds when it comes to her medical needs. And the medical facility in itself is a joke. Tells Ms. Lawson to put in a kyte for her supplies after she's been incarcerated a good 7 years and has never been able to wear stuff or has had to use stuff too big for her because the nurses don't even know what day it is in here.

If it's not medical problem, it's inconsistency. This place is a joke and the superintendent a laughingstock among the confines of this mockery of a prison. The staff has no control over anything. Rules change according to each officer. There is no rulebook for this facility and it has been in the making for a year now. This place is a summer camp for the male officers who run around here with that perverted gleam in their eyes. One officer was already fired in just the first four months for having several relationships with inmates. Two went to seg for it for 47 and 67 days.

privileges and are offering recreational programs such as aerobics on an incentive basis. At no other Oregon facility, where female prisoners have been housed, have aerobics been offered on an incentive basis.

Now, from my knowledge, there are no male prisons in the state of Oregon who have to go through what their female counterparts are going through.Male prisoners within Oregon DOC are not denied such exercise opportunityies or activities regardless of their institutional conduct. By denying us women, or allowing only a certain few such activities, is discriminatory in many ways.

A lot of female prisoners within CCCF have eating disorders. No eating disorder counseling services are available for the medium facility. The prisoners with eating disorders should be given the right to participate in exercise activities.

The way that many women are viewing their situation is that there is nothing to lose, since there is nothing to do. By providing all prisoners with these activities, I believe the violence will decline. Providing for some and not all causes conflicts between the prisoners, which in turn causes a threat to the safety and security of the facility and does not reduce the risk of criminal behavior.

As winter time rolls around and prisoners are forced to be indoors, **violence will rise more!**

What are CCCF officials going to do to prevent this?

To help the Oregon female prisoners gain equality amongst each other as well as with the male prisoners, please contact the following Oregon officials and inquire why this is going on and demand that we all receive equality.

Oregon DOC Director
2575 Center Street
Salem, OR 97310

Joan Palmateer
Superintendent, CCCF
24499 SW Grahams Ferry Rd
Wilsonville, OR 97070

Violence in Oregon's Female Prisons on All-Time Rise

by Barrilee Bannister, #11309597

As of 9/1/98, under Oregon DOC Policy 20.1.1, mission, vision and care values: Oregon DOC's misson is to promote public safety by holding offenders accountable for their actions and reducing the risk of future criminal behavior.

Violence among the prisoners at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (CCCF) has bypassed any amount of violence which has occurred at any other female facility (Oregon Women's Correctional Center, Columbia River Correctional Institute) or facilities where female prisoners have been housed temporarily (CCA/Arizona, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution).

A fight between two female prisoners would occur perhaps every 6 to 8 months at other facilities. Since CCCF (medium security) opened six months ago in April 2002, over twenty fights have occurred.

If any Oregon DOC official goes back and views misconduct records, etc, this will clearly be seen and perhaps then something constructive can be done to stop the violence and cut down on some of the women being seriously injured.

The violence at CCCF is not due to the diversity of race or ethnicities, nor is it crime-related or due to the age of prisoners nor due to overcrowding--all typical reasons for violence amongst prisoners in the United States.

The violence amongst prisoners is due to the lack of recreational programs available (aerobics, weights, etc).

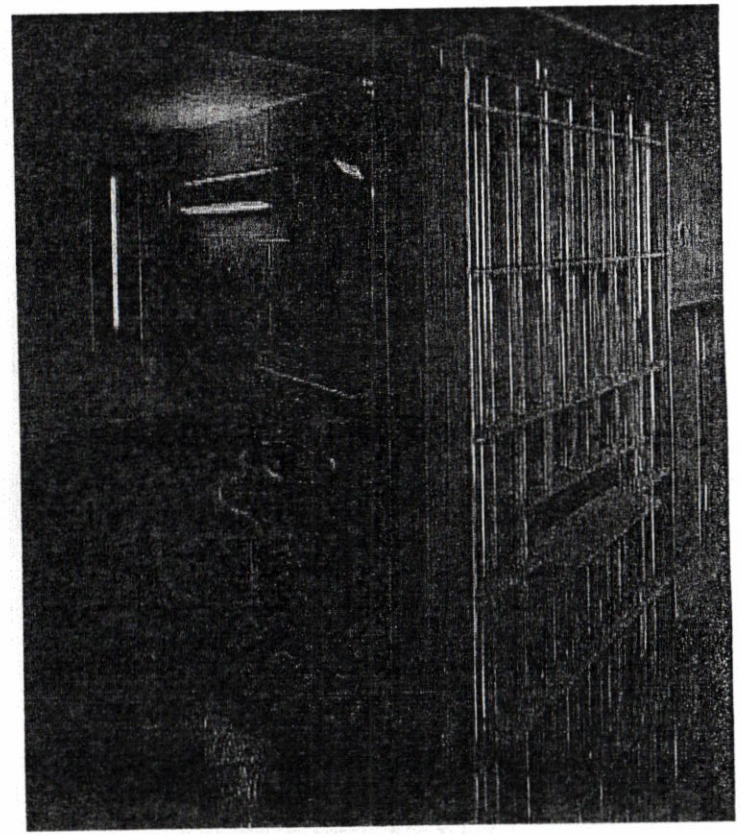
The minimum facility of CCCF has plenty of recreational programs while the medium facility, where prisoners have more time, has next to nothing to keep us occupied. Because of this, many prisoners within the medium facility have developed an "I don't give a fuck" attitude. After all, what do they have to look forward to? What do they have to lose?

The officials of CCCF are discriminating against some prisoners while accommodating others. Should prisoners be treated differently?

The officials of CCCF explain this treatment as earned

Just so the staff at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville know: you're all a joke with your pumped-up babysitting jobs. You demean yourselves when you demean us. You insult yourselves when you insult us. And when you come to work pissed because your man or woman smacked you up the night before, don't take it out on us, or Karma will fail all. And to the few who do care, thanks. We are human beings just like everyone else.

Sticking it out with a shit-eating grin in the face of the ones I despise the most,
Christine L. Foos
#8949435



Words to Think About

1—being evaluated by a superior compels submission, which may not be part of your role and tasks

2—communication & support should never be separated

3—objectively examine mistakes and their consequences, both good and bad

4—listen to intuition. Learn the true & false voices.

5—do not underestimate the power of aimless stupidity.

6—remember whose side you're really on ultimately

7—be suspicious of anything that goes too well

8—never make your enemies' job easier

9—part of having power is knowing how it relates to others

10—communication is a survival skill—anywhere, anytime, with anything or anyone

11—there are fake-outs, feints and diversions, often used as conversation. Learn to recognize them.

was a bit shocked that she was never caught for not attending school all those years *No one* must have cared. Anyway, Nicky was asking another woman outside this building if the unit supervisor was here. When the other woman told Nicky that the supervisor was in his office, she began to make an "unauthorized" move by coming up the walk to enter into the building. This could have landed her in segregation and/or the loss of privileges for up to ninety days. I was glad to see that the supervisor came to the door to see what she wanted. I then heard her say, "Guess what? I passed the TABE test!"* She was high on her accomplishment and she just don't know, but I shared in her joy tremendously.

Linda Caldwell, B07089
Dwight Correctional Center
PO Box 5001
Dwight, IL 60420

*The TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) is given to every woman that comes into the institution. This became a part of the prison formality in 1987 when there were movements promoting educating prisoners instead of just "warehousing" them and sending them back into the world worse than when they came in. As I asserted earlier, a woman must have at least a 6.0 (sixth grade level) on math and reading or they are classsifed as "mandatory education." If you have a 6.0 in all areas tested (math, reading, grammar, English, science and social studies), then you've passed the TABE.

many years, "Negroes" were denied educations, because when one becomes educated, they are better able to make "informed" choices. I have completed one module of classes this prison term in the Spring of 1999. And I have been in segregation since May 4, 1999. My segregation release date exceeds my current 2005 outdate.

The segregation unit where I am housed is stationed right across the road from the restaurant management building which is right next door to Jane Addams Hull (Dwight Correctional Center's combo District #428 classrooms, the library and the law library). So I can see from my roadside window the school lines that pass by. Some of those women in that ABE/GED line were in that line ten years ago. That gives me mixed feelings. Why? First, I am glad to see that they are still hanging in there. Of course, school is mandatory for women who score below 6.0 on math and reading tests. Mandatory means they must be in school for ninety days (more on this later). Second, I am concerned that it is taking women such a long time to achieve their GED.

Let me share this with you…Last week I saw a woman (who I'll call Nicky) walking down Hazard Drive in front of my assigned unit. Nicky has been incarcerated here since the early to mid-eighties. She's serving a fifty-four year sentence. Upon Nicky's entrance into Dwight, she could not read or write a lick! I believe she told me some years back that she only went to the second grade. I

12—don't charge the enemy without ammunition or support.

13—plans are trashed in combat. Competence and experience are not.

14—there is a time to be a warrior. No matter what level the battle is on, be ready.

15—if any enemy wants a target, give them your strongest one.

16—learn to observe with all your senses

17—superiority is not in politics, religion, race, sex, economics or heredity. It is in the mind.

18—avoid those who consider thought an optional activity

19—do not confuse survival instincts with bravery or cowardice

"JUSTICE? FOR WHO?"

The women that find themselves incarcerated, dream of the day they will be viewed with the same importance society gives to the defence of animals and the environment! Women in confinement envision the day they will become self-sufficient mothers, wives and daughters rather than, the governor's warehoused slaves, set aside in caged confinement for the almighty dollar. As taxpayers it is essential that you are aware of the millions of hard earned dollars society pays to keep mothers incarcerated, while the Union of Correctional Offecers are living high on the hog with money that would serve better left in your pockets. Instead you support the governor and his most faithful contributors so they may continue to live the good life. It has been proposed all state workers in California will receive minimum wage. However, this does not apply to the Correctional Officers in women's prisons although, they need only to possess a GED or High School Equivalency test there is little extra training. It comes down to Overpaid men with the mentality of a adolescent schoolboy who either uses his authority for his advantage or abuses his excelled testerione at his discretion.

Women in prison are mothers and individuals who would rather not be dependent on society or the prison system, they long for the day when again thy will reunite with their children. Unfortunatly, the realism is little or no help for incarcerated women caught in this unwarranted superflorivilous system.

It is hard to get anyone to pay attention to the women struggling when they are arrested, and even harder once you are behind the barbed wire fences, locked away from society. Then Society has this idea if they put you their, you belong. What of the wrongfully oversentenced in our country, unless your case is big and news worthy, no one will pay attention therfore, you're left unvoiced and the war unwaged! Most cases that draw attention are cases of women who have committed heinous criminal acts that even the most open hearted citizen would have a hard time feeling empathy towards. They use these cases that are few and far between to paint an overall portrait of women in prison. Our media runs these stories into the ground and therfore the rest of us are silenced in this forgotten world of the dammed! We are finished before we even found the strength to speak our voice toward the injustice.

I wonder how society stands by as a catholic Priest serves no time in prison for molesting children? When this kind of attack will damage a child for life. Yet, it is worse to take a life of an abuser that molested your own child than it is for a priest to destroy a child at the start of his! Oh, what privilages the men of the good ol boys club possess." What society of women are we that stand by and let this go on?

of time and energy in preparing the studio photo shoots.

I did notice that the women at college level are more open to a prisoner helping them. Some still want to cheat their way through, like in the world, but most are on a higher plane in their attempt to learn.

So when I was released and was unsuccessful in passing the computer exams in interviews, I went back to school. I enrolled in the junior college's graphic design program and did good, receiving As and Bs from my instructors. One of my instructors influenced me to further pursue my studies in the field. At that time I also was approved for financial assistance from the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) for school. I applied at the University and was accepted. But I could tell from my scholarship interview that perhaps my choice as an art major was not good. At least as this school.

Needless to say, my transition back to my old stomping grounds was not a success. I started to experience severe depression. I reached out, but could not get the services I needed. I started seeking out self-medicating means. I was dying inside. I began going around the same old people with their same old drug mentalities and I ended up doing the same old thing and having the same old outcome—prison. School was shot!

Well, in my particular circumstance, with education came resistance. I suppose that's why for

computer experience. When I got out I could not get a job because I did not have the computer skills needed. But I learned all the old conventional ways of marking, pasting, shooting, cutting and producing commercial artwork for ads, billboards, window displays, magazines, newspapers, etc. I was excellent in the darkroom and it taught me patience, working with a camera.

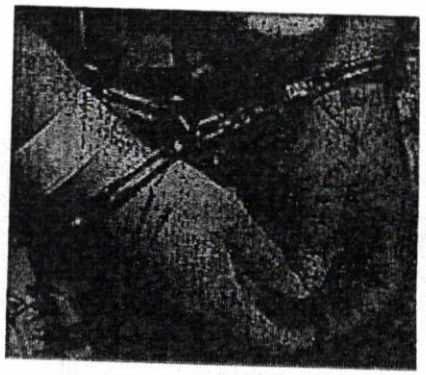
Anyway, while I pursued the commercial art program during the day, I also continued my academic studies in the evening. That fall of 1994 I was on the Dean's List with a 3.5 GPA. The only time I never made the Dean's List was the prior fall when I went to segregation and received Fs for non-attendance of class. I retook one of the classes and got an A when it was offered again. So, four out of five times I made the Dean's List and, after my 3.5 GPA, I shot up to 4.0 the next four times I enrolled in school.

After completing the program and graduating, I became the class's teacher's aide. I must admit that this was to my personal benefit as I was allowed to put together a very amateurish portfolio with the hope of maybe getting a scholarship or an apprentice position. I came to love the field. My eyes were set on advertising. Mr. Lee was great with helping me to make a makeshift portfolio for there were too many rules and restrictions here to fully learn about the field. Right before I was to be released, my best photography work was confiscated. I had spent lots

Who ever believes poor women in our society have a chance for fair treatment in our society has never been poor and caught up in the system. It matters not, if you are white, black, asian, or blue for that mattar ! In prison their are just as many of one as the other.

Life in prison plus 33 years is what a 25 year old mother of three received for being involved in a high speed chase. This mother was convicted of the crime as if she herself had committed it. she will be eligible to go in front of the parole board when she is 58 years old, and will not have a chance for the parole board to see if the facts are unjust untill that day and not a year before. The circumstances of her case are that she took a ride with an old friend, whom she had not seen in quite sometime. The police tried to pull him over and proceeded to take them on a high speed chase and fire erratic shots not aiming at anyone directly. He was on Meth and feared the police would kill him. I was the young mother caught up in this mans nightmare. He managed to get away, I was arrested and charged as if I alone had committed this crime. No one was hurt or killed and I was charged to Life in prison + 33 years of enhancements for a misdemeanor charge I aquired a few years earlyer. This is what happens to young mothers caught in the system who dare fight with no money. Society has a idea that tax dollars go to keep hardend criminals behind bars, this is true for such a small percent. Tax dollars go to keep mothers like me incarcerated, and to pay for the treatment of the many hours of councling three children receive because the only caregiver they have ever known is in prison. I am the profile of a single mother, poor, and uneducated of the system and it's unjust ways. I know their are all kinds of women who are incarcerated and fit the same profile who live the same pointless existence, in the hope that one day things will change and we will be reunited with our children. I hope people read this and form their own conclusion, watch the news and just see if you can find someone who receives this kind of sentence, what I hope is you will have an open mind concerning not only women in prison but women in any struggle to become independent and less dependent, in areas they man find themselves as a victim of unjustifiable circumstance.

Rhonda Leland



Rhonda Leland W62446
PO Box 92, C-3-1-4Low
Chowchilla, CA 93610-0092

DEFICIENT DIAGNOSIS

ATHENA GODIVA GOLDMAN

Oregon DOC policy for treatment/medical care states the following:

Level 1: Medically mandatory is care and treatment that is essential to life and health, without which rapid deterioration may be an expected outcome and where medical/surgical intervention makes a very significant difference and/or has a very high cost-effectiveness. Level 1 care and treatment should be routinely provided to all inmates. Any health service employee may authorize care and treatment of Level 1.

Level 2: Presently, medically necessary is care or treatment without which an inmate could not be maintained without significant risk of further serious reduction in the chance of possible repair after release or without signifcant pain or discomfort. Level 2 care and treatment may be provided to inmates subject to periodic utilization review by the chief medical officer. Any treating practitioner may authorize care and treatment of Level 2 conditions.

Level 3: Medically acceptable but not medically necessary is care and treatment--non-fatal conditions where intervention may improve the quality of life for the inmates. Level 3 care and treatment may or may not be authorized based upon review of an individual case. The CMO may authorize or deny care and treatment of Level 3.

Level 4: Limited medical value is care and treatment which may be valuable to a certain individual but is significantly less likely to be cost-effective or to produce substantial, long-term improvement. Level 4 care and treatment will not be routinely provided to inmates by the Department.

Inmates may elect to obtain services for conditions at any of these levels ***at their own expense*** *in accordance with OAR 291-124-0085 (1).*

Most inmates within Oregon DOC do not have the necessary funds that would allow them to 'elect to obtain services for conditions...at their own expense.' Oregon inmates have no medical insurance and are not eligible for public assistance. Oregon DOC officials cannot excuse themselves for denying care and treatment just because the

my job less seriously. I liked what I was doing. I liked helping others to learn. This was my first lesson in literacy in prison. And while I was helping others to learn during the day, I took college courses at night.

My second term in prison was similar. However, I spent more time in the classroom learning myself. I could never come to terms with a major so I took general study courses to see what appealed to me. I've always had a little artistic talent but nothing I thought was career-worthy. So the search was on and it lasted two years. (My prison terms was eight years) I decided to get into one of the few vocational programs offered in hopes of getting a job upon my release. Then I could later go back to school once I "came up" (got on my feet) on the streets.

So in the fall of 1994, I was accepted in the commercial art and photography vocational program. I enjoyed the program. I liked my teacher. We worked on our own. Basically it was an "open" program. This basically meant you did not have to wait for a nine month program opening. You could enter at anytime for everyone worked at their own pace. I learned much, but I knew I would not be able to get a job in the field when I got a few months into the program and was placed behind a computer. My instructor did not have the computer skills that were called for to teach computer skills. It was "hit and miss" on the computer, even with the MacIntosh manuals. I did not have any prior

assigned to the YCA child care program as a teacher's aide. I had plenty of experience, for my foster mother not only housed seven foster children (two her grandsons) but she babysat six to seven days a week, from newborn to grade school—every age, shape, size and color. My mom was fairly well-known amongst the Afrikan-Amerikan community for taking care of children because she had been doing it for a number of years.

Since that first job as a teacher's aide, I have worked a few other times as an aide. I went from preschool to being a teacher's aide for adults when I came to prison. My first experience was a bit overwhelming. The women were challenging. They felt that they had to "remind" me I was a prisoner. I was there to help them, not myself. They made it difficult to help them. At this time, I was an aide to a teacher in Adult Basic Education, otherwise known as ABE. When he was transferred to the GED teacher position, I became the aide for his GED class. Those in ABE were learning basic skills from first grade level up to eighth grade level. Then they began studying for their GED in the advanced class.

I did not force my help on anyone. Some would not accept my help because of their own prejudice and because I was not trying to help them cheat. But there was always a few who really wanted to learn and did not care where they received their help as long as they were learning. Because I was in prison did not mean I should take

cost is expensive.

This seems to be the case for Oregon female inmate Michelle Everett #12148924. Michelle was taken to the infirmary several months ago after approximately six to eight days of complaining and requesting medical care for not feeling well. Only after becoming jaundiced did she get medical attention. At first, everyone thought Michelle had hepatitis (which is common in prison). Hepatitis, according to Michelle, was ruled out after several tests. Michelle was then told she had cirrhosis of the liver, which was then ruled out after several tests. These several tests were only blood and urine and the abdomen being palpated or pressed to determine if the liver felt hard and the spleen enlarged. Michelle was then told that medication she was taking was the cause of whatever liver damage she has. She thne was told that a bile duct was obstructed and there was nothing they cuold do--it would eventually heal itself.

What Michelle needs is a definitive dianosis that will probably require a biopsy, in which a needle is used to take a sample of liver tissue. If indeed Michelle's bile duct is obstructed, she should have surgery to unobstruct it becuase, as Michelle continues to be in the infirmary, her health continues to deteriorate. Michelle's fellow inmates in general population are worried and scared that if Michelle's medical care continues to be neglected, she may die in prison and never make her release date to be reunited with her children and the rest of her family.

Oregon female inmate Danielle Conatser #13752501 has another story to tell about Oregon DOC medical care. In her case, it's downright negligence which may have cost her the right to bear children in the future. Danielle was given a pap smear that came back with abnormalities. The medical officials called her in and told her that she had cervical cancer. She requested a second opinion since she had just had a baby approximately six weeks before and believed that her doctor, before she had her baby, would have informed her. Several months down the road, she was taken to the hospital for a second opinion. They said they were putting her to sleep in order to give her a biopsy. When she woke up, she was informed that a good portion of her cervix was removed and that the DOC doctor that diagnosed her was the one that performed the operation. She never received a second opinion. Since then, she has had no follow-up care. Danielle is a twenty-year-young female--now living with fear that she has cancer, yet not knowing it it's true.

Please show your support for these two women by writing to them and offering them much needed encouragement. Most importantly, show your support by calling or writing to the following state officials

and demand that these two women be given proper care and treatment and, in Danielle Conatser's case, why what happened was allowed to happen.

Oregon Governor
258 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97310

Governor
Affirmative Action
155 Cottage Street
Salem, OR 97310
(503) 373-1224

DOC Director
2575 Center Street
Salem, OR 97310

These two women are also in need of legal representation to obtain their medical records, which DOC has refused to give them copies of. They need help with their right to discovery of trial preparation materials and the right to bargain collectively on their behalf. They both seek an attorney that will take their case against Oregon DOC (and outside contractors involved) on a contingency fee--where the charge of services rendered will depend on a successful outcome of their cases. If anyone knows of any attorneys willing to take their cases or perhaps be interested in their cases, please contact Michelle and Danielle. Any help is greatly appreciated. They do not have the necessary means to act pro se.

Michelle Everett #12148924
Danielle Conatser #13752501

Coffee Creek Correctional Facility
PO Box 9000
Wilsonville, OR 97070

Ora pro norbis
(pray for us)

Vox populi vox dei
(The voice of the people is the voice of God)

me and my youngest foster brother. By then, I was drinking and smoking pot daily and was in an abusive relationship. I ended up receiving my GED in the county jail in the same year I would have graduated from high school.

Ever since, I have spent my life in and out of school, prison, mental health wards, drug treatment, jail and dysfunctional relationships. And I have attained a total of 153 credit hours between two schools. At Lawis University, I received my AAS degree with a 3.7 grade point average and, at Illinois Central College, I have a 3.3. grade point average (and I need six math credit hours, two math classes, to achieve my AA degree.) My AAS is in commercial art and photography.

Currently, I am working on a theology associates degree through correspondence study from Amherst Theological Seminary. And if the Lord is willing, I will continue my education when I ma released, majoring in Business and possibly Civil Law. Due to my status, I am not eligible for the courses offered at this facility and I've not been successful in acquiring a scholarship from my academia programs through correspondence studies. My goal is a master's degree.

I enjoy teaching as well as learning and have been fortunate enough to work as an aid. I detasseled every summer from the age of twelve to fifteen years old. When I became of legal working age, the government's summer program gave me my first "real" job at sixteen years old. I was

incentive to get good grades in hopes of being liked and accepted by my classmates.

My high school years were short and miserable. I decided to leave my racist classmates and try to be socially accepted by those in "my" community who were the same color as myself. Well, I found public high school as challenging—I was still different. Many of my high school peers of color often criticized me for acting or speaking like a "white" girl. So again I felt rejection and, as a teenager, it was harder to bear. I left school and I left home to become more "black."

In my search, I found that for many, particularly in a city populous, being black meant poverty, illiteracy and addictions. My little community did not boast of these oppressors as blatantly as I found in the projects forty-some miles down the highway in Peoria, Illinois. One of the first great surprises I found when I left home in search of my "blackness" and started living with my older foster brother and sister-in-law was that my foster brothers were allowed to graduate from high school with a diploma and everything and they could not read or write. How did my foster mom and the State of Illinois allow this to happen? They were "wards of the state." Didn't anyone care? Or know?

Fact of the matter, I liked school as far as learning, but my peers made it unpleasant. So I began going to a junior college in an attempt to receive my GED since the army would not accept

Word Search

by Barrilee Gispert Bannister

1—IN THE
2—NEW SOCIETY
3—WOMAN WILL BE
4—ENTIRELY
5—INDEPENDENT,
6—BOTH SOCIALLY
7—AND ECONOMICALLY.
8—SHE WILL NOT
9—BE SUBJECTED
10—TO EVEN A TRACE
11—OF DOMINATION
12—AND EXPLOITATION
13—BUT WILL BE FREE
14—AND MAN'S EQUAL,
15—AND MISTRESS
16—OF HER OWN LOT.
17— --AUGUST BEBEL

- Word Search -

by Pamela Gispert Bannister

I N D E P E N D E N T Q U P D W R X A
S N E H L M A N J E C T U Z X O D N W
T O T S O H S D M S C N H O Q M X Q T
Z L H H I E B E B L G U S F T A E W H
B R N B E S U B J E C T E D W N C E V
A D V O T W A S V D T W X O Z W L L A
B U T W I L L B E F R E E M B I C D N
S H E W I L L N O T J C E I T L G Y D
S H R L W I L M I T R T C N M L N L M
V E L S A P Y H S Y A O A A W B L L I
N H L P X V O W T U Y W R T O E O A S
A U G U S T B E B E L N T I M X S C T
G V O P H T I R N O A V A O A S U I R
Q M W Z B C M I N T M C N N P U E M E
A L L Y O L V T E U I U E X A B Z O S
N P T S L O Y E V P I R V L B J T N S
C L W H I Y T W E D W I E C V E U O C
R E Q T M U P D M W N T O L P T N C Z
N H E R O W V X V T O D T A Y R E E B
A N D E X P L O I T A T I O N S T D T
T R U T H C E Q L O R E H S N A M N O
D S Y L L A I C O S H T O B W I L A S
P O W E R L A U Q E S N A M D N A R F
O F H E R O W N L O T B T S U G K B E

A Prisoner's Literacy Experience

I was asked to share my insights and experiences with you all about literacy and women in prison. Mind you, I am no expert and you will even find errors in my own literary endeavor. However, I can share, with confidence, what I have seen during my three prison terms.

Before I take "the big plunge," let me give you a little educational background on myself. I attended kindergarten and first grade at a public school, Emerson Elementary. When I went onto second grade I decided to try parochial school. Big decision for a six-year-old and I did not even know it. All I knew was that my next-door neighbor, who was my best friend, went to a different school than I was, and I was going to try and change that. My foster mother did not mind sending me to St. Mary's. This was the same school she had put her two grandsons through and we had faithfully attended 10:30 mass every Sunday.

The two greatest disappointments about my choice were 1) this was my first lesson in racism and hatred. I still experience ramifications from those seven years of non-acceptance, never being good enough because of the color my skin. (Perhaps I should have mentioned that I am Afrikan-Amerikan.) 2),My best friend never told me she flunked first grade and that she would not be in my second grade class. But I can tell you that the prejudice that I was faced with gave me an extra

Prison Fellowships offers many services to prisoners. You do not have to be religious or a Christian to obtain these services. They offer "Prison Fellowship Seminars," "Marriage Seminars," "Life Plan Seminars," Prison Fellowship Bible Studies," "Prison Fellowship Mentors." The one that prisoners with children should get involved with is Angel Tree. It is a ministry of prison fellowship in which volunteers buy and deliver Christmas gifts for prisoners' children. The gifts are given on behalf of the incarcerated parent. Not all programs are available in all prisons. Ask your chaplain about Prison Fellowship programs in your prison. If you are transferred, ask your new chaplain about programs in that prison.

Prison Fellowships has more than 50 local offices to serve the entire United States. If you wish to find the office nearest you, write to:
Prison Fellowship (National Office)
PO Box 17500
Washington, DC 20041-0500

Survivors of Incest Anonymous
World Service Office
P.O. Box 190
Benson, MD 21018
Organization for sexual abuse survivors. Utilizes the 12 Step method. Free literature

I am currently incarcerated for 8.6 years and have been given only one opportunity to learn the latest computer technology. When I move over to the minimum facility opportunities will be limited because of treatment and space for women who have just come in and need the same opportunities, but will only be in prison for 1-2 years. The majority of jobs here in the D.O.C. have no skills I will be able to use for a job when I parole. ESU Cad/Cam was one of the best jobs available in the D.O.C. and I was lucky to be able to work over there, but even then I was unable to acquire the skills necessary to obtain a certificate. CCCF does not have enough schooling or on the job training programs for inmates who are serious about changing their behaviors and habits to become productive citizens in their own communities. But if we do receive the skills we will need to find a job and training in the computer field we will be able to have the skills that will get us in the door of a company. Nowadays every position has some type of computer involved even the grocery stores and for women like myself who have been in prison for 8 years or more we need the experience and confidence learning the technology provides.

I currently owe over 26 thousand dollars to the state of Oregon in restitution and fines that so far no judge would even consider modifying or dismissing. I have no assets of any kind and no money to support myself, purchase clothes for job interviews or even to feed myself when I parole. I don't have a place to live nor will I be able to even afford a studio apartment without a decent job. But with the skills I've learned while in this class I will have the golden opportunity to achieve my goal of never coming back to prison. I can take these newly acquired skills over to the minimum facility and help as a tutor or clerk. The inmates housed over in the minimum do not receive the amount of schooling as we do and have various other programs they need to finish while their over there. Whereas the majority of the women eligible for the Med. Computer Tech. VT have already completed the necessary programs such as Pathfinders, Cognitive and Breaking Barriers. Many women do not go minimum because of various reasons be it mental health or cell restrictions and these women deserve the same opportunities for training and education as the women housed over in the minimum facility. I would never have been able to acquire these skills while over in minimum, I would be placed on the outside work crew and pick up garbage or do park cleanup for the last 18 months of my prison sentence. I've been their before and know first hand that these positions do not prepare us for jobs in the community. How can my life change and improve unless I receive the training I need to get a job. The Programs that are offered both in min. and med. are the same Pathfinders, Cognitive and Parenting I've completed these already and still have 3.5 years left of my current sentence. When I move to min. I will have approximately 2.4 years left to do and the only programming available will be InFocus or Turning Point and we have to complete those the last year we are incarcerated. So the skills I learn over here in med. will give me the skills to help other inmates to make changes in their lives by being an example and mentor to the young women who are coming to these walls for the first time. Had I been given this opportunity when I first came into the system I believe that I would not be here today. I was never given the opportunity to learn skills and behaviors I needed to maintain a decent life without using drugs and crime as a support network. This is my fourth incarceration within the O.D.O.C. and I want it to be my last. I hope to

parole with the skills needed to obtain a job so that I can support myself. I understand there are other WBE VT programs available over in Minimum Facility. The Organic Gardening and Eye Glass Repair are good programs but they do not give us the computer skills we need to obtain employment when we parole.

We could generate needed money into the Dept. and would validate the expense of training the women in the Computer Tech. field and increase revenue for the WBE Dept. this would give us the mind set to succeed in the job market and retain the skills when we parole and make a difference for our families and communities. Personally I think it would be a waste to cut a program so important to the women and communities surrounding it. Understandably the first class of women would need to complete the bare essentials so we will be trained to become production workers in whatever area the Dept. finds suitable for us. I believe with the resources we already have and the motivation I find in all my classmates we can be a successful enterprise and teach others the value of an education and teamwork.

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The Council on Family Health is offering a guide sheet on the safe use of prescription drugs. It includes questions to ask your doctor and things to watch out for to avoid drug interactions. The information in this pamphlet applies to legally dispensed prescription medications only. Two pamphlets are available: "Ten Guides to Proper Medicine Use" and "Drug Interactions: What You Should Know." Write for your free copies:
Federal Consumer Information Center
Dept. 44
Pueblo, CO 81009

Alcoholics Anonymous will send free information dealing with alcholism. AA will also set up AA meetings in prison at the request of the prison administrator or a member of the professional staff. AA also offers booklets and books at low prices. Write for more information:
Alcoholics Anonymous
General Services Office
Grand Central Station
PO Box 459
New York, NY 10163